



November 16, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Andy Slavitt, Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
201 Independence Avenue, SW Room 445-G  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell and Acting Administrator Slavitt:

On behalf of the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, I am writing to express strong support for the extension of the Healthcare Transformation and Quality Improvement Program 1115 Demonstration Waiver for the state of Texas.

The Catholic Conference recognizes that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services clearly prefers that federal Medicaid funding be used to provide expanded insurance coverage, rather than making supplemental Uncompensated Care payments to hospitals to care for the uninsured. Nevertheless, in the absence of expanded Medicaid coverage, Texas' public and charitable Catholic hospitals depend upon the 1115 Waiver to provide billions of dollars a year in charitable and uncompensated medical care. We also endorse continued funding of the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Projects, which have provided crucial services (e.g., to provide behavioral health services) to nearly 1,400 previously underserved Texas communities. Dramatic reductions in the uncompensated care payments (such as were experienced by the state of Florida) could result in a severe crisis for our state's health care safety net.

Given state leaders' reluctance to expand Medicaid coverage, we face the risk of a political standoff, with most of the risk being borne by those poor and vulnerable Texans who are least capable of sustaining the burden. Breaking this impasse requires a redoubling of efforts by state and federal leaders to achieve a workable compromise that combines a renewal of the 1115 Waiver with a coverage plan for uninsured adults to maximize both federal funding and the state's resources to provide quality health care to our neediest Texans.

Sincerely,

Jeffery R. Patterson, PhD  
Executive Director